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ABSTRACT

This booklet contains the oaths that U.S. Army military personnel are required to affirm. The oaths include the Oath of Office for Officers and Army Civilians and the Oath of Enlistment. To explain certain values inherent in the oaths, descriptive passages from actual experiences are used to illustrate the personnels' affirmation to courage, commitment, candor, and competence. (DJC)

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YOUR OATH

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that ..."

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Defending the Constitution
Our Common Bond

WELCOME TO THE ARMY TEAM! A TEAM MADE SPECIAL BY THE OATH YOU AND OTHERS TAKE TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES. THOSE WHO TOOK THE OATH AND SERVED BEFORE YOU CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED THE ARMY'S INDIVIDUAL VALUES OF COURAGE, COMMITMENT, CANDOR, AND COMPETENCE. THIS PAMPHLET DESCRIBES THE LINK BETWEEN YOUR OATH AND THOSE VALUES AND VIVIDLY ILLUSTRATES THE CHALLENGE YOU ACCEPT WHEN YOU PLEDGE TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTION
OUR COMMON BOND

OATH OF OFFICE

(OFFICERS AND ARMY CIVILIANS)

"I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR (OR AFFIRM) THAT I WILL **SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES** AGAINST ALL ENEMIES, FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC; THAT I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE SAME; THAT I TAKE THIS OBLIGATION FREELY, WITHOUT ANY MENTAL RESERVATION OR PURPOSE OF EVASION; AND THAT I WILL WELL AND FAITHFULLY DISCHARGE THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE UPON WHICH I AM ABOUT TO ENTER. SO HELP ME GOD."

OATH OF ENLISTMENT

"I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR (OR AFFIRM) THAT I WILL **SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES** AGAINST ALL ENEMIES, FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC; THAT I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE SAME; AND THAT I WILL OBEY THE ORDERS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE ORDERS OF THE OFFICERS APPOINTED OVER ME, ACCORDING TO REGULATIONS AND THE UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE. SO HELP ME GOD."

SOLDIER'S
MEDAL

"... I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic; ..."

When taking your oath, you accept the challenge to exhibit courage — the mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty in the performance of your duties. The following are examples of those who have shown the type of courage the Army expects from its soldiers and civilians:

COURAGE

In a stream near a major installation, an infantry unit was completing its tactical river crossing. Pulling their assault boats to shore, the soldiers heard a call for help. A noncommissioned officer (NCO) had fallen off an assault boat and into the rain swollen stream. The churning water swept him downstream, as the weight of his combat gear pulled him under the water. Showing no regard for his own safety, an enlisted soldier jumped into the water and swam towards where he had last seen the drowning sergeant. The soldier dived under the water's surface and grabbed the NCO. With physical fortitude, he kept the sergeant afloat. He then grabbed and held onto an over hanging tree branch. Both soldiers were rescued soon thereafter by other members of the unit. The courageous subordinate saved this sergeant's life.

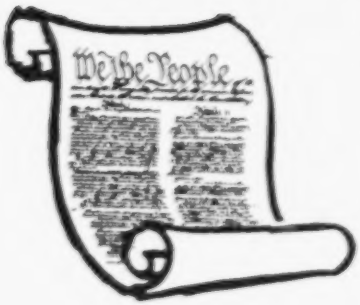
* * *

Answering his nation's call in 1967, a young man fought in an infantry unit in the Republic of Vietnam. After his tour, he established a successful law career. Thirteen years later, he decided to resume military service. The former soldier accepted a commission as a captain. He took command of a Signal Company with major problems — an extremely high turnover rate and high percentage of missing or unserviceable equipment. The company routinely failed to support the brigade properly. But, because of the new commander's dynamic leadership style, the company soon stopped failing inspections and started delivering the communications support required. The company gained fame as the best in the group. Unknown to his subordinates, the company commander also battled cancer. Despite the harsh side effects of his therapy — loss of weight and general physical weakness — the captain vowed to succeed. He lost more weight, most of his hair, and the effective use of one eye. In spite of these physical handicaps, he deployed his unit to a major exercise in England. The unit achieved the highest success rate ever. Three months later, the captain's health deteriorated to the point where he carried a portable oxygen unit with him; however, he continued to perform his duties. He died 22 August 1985. This courageous man's actions stand as a legacy for all.

* * *

The clerk time-stamped forms and verified information on procurement requests. While checking requests he noticed the maintenance engineer ordered complete battery assemblies for night vision equipment. He asked his co-workers why the engineer purchased complete assemblies instead of only the needed repair parts. They quickly pointed out that engineers traditionally ordered the complete assemblies and advised the clerk not to question the order. Most employees in the office feared the engineer who was known for being tough and vocal. They told the clerk the story about the engineer firing a mail clerk. Against the advice of his co-workers and despite his fears, the clerk brought the problem to his supervisor's attention. His supervisor discussed the request with the engineer who totally agreed with the clerk's recommendation. Because of his moral courage in questioning the requisition, this civilian employee saved the Army over $1,000,000 and gained the respect and admiration of the engineer.

* * *



THE CONSTITUTION

"... that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; ..."

When taking your oath, you accept the challenge to exhibit commitment — dedication to proudly serving your nation as a member of the total team. Taking the forms of patriotism and esprit de corps, commitment must be practiced on a daily basis to maximize both individual and team productivity. The following people exemplify the ideas of commitment:

COMMITMENT

A communications specialist retired from the Army after 30 years of civilian service. Handpicked to train soldiers on a special amplitude modulation (AM) broadcast system, the specialist returned to duty 6 months later. He aided in the preparation of the system for deployment to Grenada and soon became an integral member of the radio team. Realizing his pivotal role in the mission, the specialist insisted on accompanying the team to Grenada. Without regard for his personal safety and conscious of being exposed to hostile fire, he directed the smooth installation and alignment of the radio system. He chose the right location, trained the military personnel, and fabricated parts that were not available. This Army civilian's commitment in volunteering to return to duty and accompany the radio team to Grenada led to a successful mission.

* * *

During 1985-86, selected infantry divisions converted to light infantry. Most personnel assigned to the divisions must complete ranger training. In one unit, many of the NCO's were not ranger qualified, but their years of experience made up for their lack of formal training. Those NCO's were not required to attend Ranger School. However, one such NCO believed that if his young soldiers were to believe in him and what he said, he must stand as an example. He attended the grueling training, received his ranger tab, and returned to the unit. He then set about the task of preparing his subordinate leaders for their rites of passage as light fighter leaders. By his commitment to be the best that he could be, he provided the Army with the best possible leadership.

* * *

The commanding officer of a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) worked on the wounded who poured in from the latest fire fight. Medics brought in a Vietnamese soldier with a live unexploded grenade embedded in his flesh. Ordnance experts informed the commander that the slightest movement of the firing pin on the warhead could detonate the device, killing everyone in the area. Acting quickly, the commander directed the hospital staff to use available materials and equipment to build a barricade around the operating table. Performing the operation alone, he delicately removed the projectile from its human resting place. He wrapped it carefully in a flak vest, and handed it to the demolition team. The operation was successful, and the patient lived. Commitment to his job and the life of another human being made the commander an excellent leader and role model.

* * *

"The torch of Truth shows much that we cannot, and all that we would not, see."

Samuel Johnson
The Rambler

OATH OF OFFICE
(OFFICERS AND ARMY CIVILIANS)

"... that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; ..."

OATH OF ENLISTMENT

"... and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

When taking your oath, you accept the challenge to exhibit candor — honesty in what one says in addition to how one acts. The Profession of Arms leaves no room for a half-truth. The accuracy of information exchanged by the Army team must be absolute. The following people exhibit the concept of candor:

CANDOR

Through constant use of candor, the clinical social worker developed a strong bond with doctors, nurses, and therapists at her large installation hospital. She was well known for never telling half-truths and for the accuracy of her reports. She realized that cancer patients requiring extensive rehabilitation faced complex questions: Which nursing home can provide for the level of care required? Who will pay the bills? Who will provide transportation? How will medication be administered? What type of special equipment will be necessary? What rehabilitation centers will be available? The Social Worker confronted this situation head-on. Initial apathy from supervisors and peers did not stop her from pointing out the problems that these patients continually faced. She developed the vision of a new program — an Interdisciplinary Rehabilitation/Discharge Planning Concept. Because of her reputation for being candid and forthright, she soon convinced management to accept the new program. The civilian employee spearheaded the highly effective program that eliminated some major health concerns of soldiers and their family members.

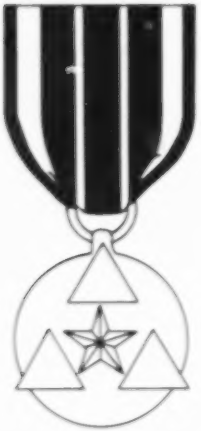
* * *

Commands use a Unit Climate Profile (UCP) to obtain reliable, valid, and representative information about a unit. The effectiveness of the UCP depends on the accuracy of the responses received. One particular brigade commander wanted to assess the climate within his unit. He gave the UCP to each officer in the brigade. One platoon leader did not believe that his viewpoints mattered. So, to avoid "rocking the boat," he decided to write down what he believed the brigade commander wanted to hear. Another platoon leader, however, was truthful and candid in his responses. Pointing out positive and negative areas of the organization, he answered the profile truthfully. Because of the second platoon leader's responses, the chain of command identified problem areas as the subordinates saw them. The comments and suggestions led to a re-evaluation of some of the policies. The new perspectives resulted in a revised, more successful plan that pleased both the soldiers and the chain of command. The second officer's candor aided in revising many policies that helped the unit's overall effectiveness.

* * *

The drill sergeant has one responsibility — to transform civilian recruits into successful soldiers. With this great responsibility comes even greater pressure. Slow learners, time constraints, and availability of training facilities are but a few of the many daily problems. One drill sergeant received substantial pressure from his commander because two of his soldiers could not qualify in basic rifle marksmanship. Time was running out. If these soldiers did not qualify, the entire unit would look bad. The sergeant faced an ethical question: Should he simply certify that these two trainees met the standard and let their future squad leader or platoon sergeant worry about the soldiers' lack of training? No, the drill sergeant went the extra yard. He made arrangements for the use of the range during his free time and personally worked extra hours with the soldiers to ensure they met the standard. Because of his candor, the soldiers were the best they could be.

* * *



COMMANDER'S
AWARD FOR
CIVILIAN SERVICE

OATH OF OFFICE
(OFFICERS AND ARMY CIVILIANS)

"... I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

OATH OF ENLISTMENT

"... and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

When taking your oath, you accept the challenge to exhibit competence — know your job, do your best, and develop your abilities to the utmost. The United States Army is the best in the world because of the dedication to excellence of each team member. Army soldiers and civilians have exhibited a high level of proficiency in the past.

COMPETENCE

An enlisted soldier, eager to continue her professional development, took advantage of the Army College Program and enrolled in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program at the University of South Alabama. While in school, she distinguished herself in ROTC by earning the Veterans of World War II Award for Academic/Military Leadership. After graduating from college, she was commissioned and assigned as the post Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC) Officer in the Chemical Corps. She saw the need for change and took immediate action. First, she updated her subordinates on the latest information about the accounting requirements code. She then established an in-house training program to develop job proficiency within her section. Satisfied that her section had attained requisite proficiency, she focused her efforts on the needs of the post. Those needs included the establishment of a post NBC school for NCOs and officers. The school gained a reputation for providing high caliber instruction. Active duty soldiers as well as National Guardsmen and Reservists vied to attend her school. Throughout her career, the officer exhibited competence — she developed her abilities and she knew her job.

* * *

In the Republic of Vietnam, competency ensured the survival of the soldier. The radio telephone operator's (RTO) job was to assist the company commander in electronic communications with his subordinate units, adjacent units, and higher headquarters. In the Summer of 1968, a company moved through the densely vegetated area. The RTO stayed at his position next to the company commander as the Viet Cong ambushed the unit. The company commander and most of the headquarters personnel went down critically wounded. On his own initiative, the RTO called for artillery fire and the medical evacuation helicopter and reported the status of his unit to higher headquarters. Through his effective mastery of these skills, the unit fought off the continued advances of a numerically superior Viet Cong force. His competence enabled the RTO to make the decisions normally made by his commander.

* * *

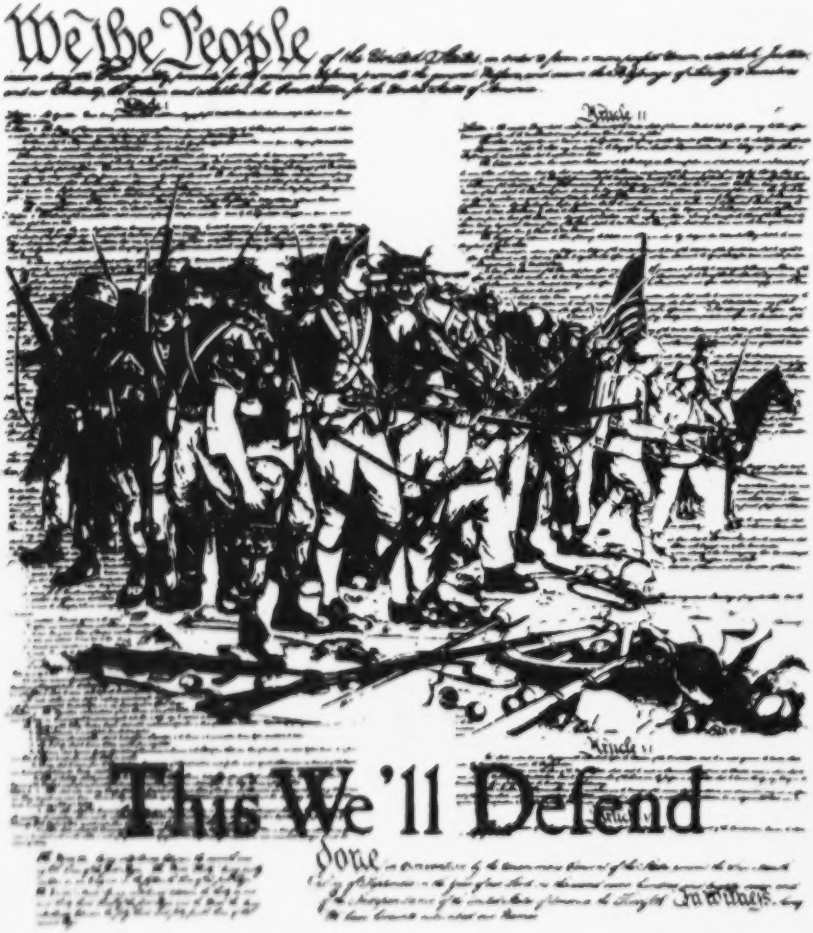
On Okinawa, an American diver foreman supervised eight native master labor contract (MLC) persons. On his own time, the foreman learned to speak and read their language — Japanese. His mastery of the language helped him to share his knowledge and expertise with the workers as well as serve as their mentor. In this role, he exhibited ability far beyond that required of a diver foreman. He managed diver and boat operations that support ocean tanker fuel delivery. This difficult work often requires a display of physical courage and dedication well beyond the norm. He developed technical proficiency that resulted in uninterrupted delivery of fuel to Okinawa. Over a 2-year period, he and his crew, without incident or spill, off-loaded and stored more than 390 million gallons of fuel for Department of Defense use on Okinawa. The competence and the energy with which this civilian employee performed his job positively influenced everyone in his unit.

* * *

TWENTY-THREE OF THE FORTY SIGNERS OF THE CONSTITUTION WERE VETERANS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. AFTER DISTINGUISHING THEMSELVES IN COMBAT, THEY WENT ON TO SERVE IN THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENT, AS PATRIOTS AND LEADERS.

WHEN TAKING THE OATH, YOU ACCEPT THE SAME DEMANDS NOW THAT AMERICAN SOLDIERS AND ARMY CIVILIANS HAVE EMBODIED SINCE THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. THE OATH DEALS WITH VALUES AND ETHICS. THIS PAMPHLET ILLUSTRATES THE INDIVIDUAL VALUES OF COURAGE, COMMITMENT, CANDOR, AND COMPETENCE. THE ACCEPTANCE OF AND ADHERENCE TO THESE VALUES WILL LEAD TO SUCCESSFUL AND REWARDING CAREERS LIKE THOSE OF THE CITIZEN SOLDIERS ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE.

THESE CITIZEN SOLDIERS EMBODIED ANOTHER SET OF VALUES INCLUDING LOYALTY, DUTY, SELFLESS SERVICE, AND INTEGRITY. THESE ATTRIBUTES ARE COLLECTIVELY REFERRED TO AS THE ARMY ETHIC. BY INSTILLING THE FOUR INDIVIDUAL VALUES WITHIN EACH SOLDIER AND ARMY CIVILIAN, WE CAN STRENGTHEN THE PROFESSIONAL ARMY ETHIC.



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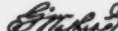
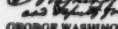
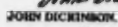


GEORGE WASHINGTON, VIRGINIA

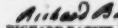


JOHN DICKINSON, DELAWARE

RICHARD BASSETT, DELAWARE

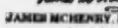


JAMES MCHENRY, MARYLAND



WILLIAM BLOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA

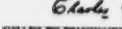
RICHARD DOBBS SPAIGHT, NORTH CAROLINA



HUGH WILLIAMSON, NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY, SOUTH CAROLINA

CHARLES PINCKNEY, SOUTH CAROLINA



PIERCE BUTLER, SOUTH CAROLINA

WILLIAM FEW, GEORGIA

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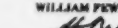
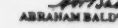
JOHN LANGDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE



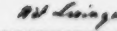
NICHOLAS GILMAN, NEW HAMPSHIRE



RUFUS KING, MASSACHUSETTS

ALEXANDER HAMILTON, NEW YORK

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON, NEW JERSEY



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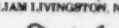
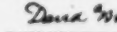
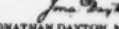


JONATHAN DAYTON, NEW JERSEY

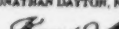


THOMAS MIFFLIN, PENNSYLVANIA

THOMAS FITZSIMMONS, PENNSYLVANIA



GOUVENEUR MORRIS, PENNSYLVANIA



WILLIAM JACKSON, SECRETARY TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION